

LIFE OF A SPINSTER;

OR
HOPES AND FEARS.

Phoebe emerged to find that she had not been missed, and presently the concert was over, and ten coming round, there was a change of places. Robert came towards her. "I am going," he said.

"Oh, Robert; when dancing would be one chance?"

"She does not mean to give me that chance; I would not ask it while she is in that dress. It is never sufficient. Good night, Phoebe, enjoy yourself."

Enjoy herself! A fine injunction, when her brother was going away in such a mood. Yet who would have expected that, hoy, honest appearance of any grievance save that her partner was missing.

Honora was vexed and concerned at his neglect, but Phoebe appeared by his report.

"Thoughtless, reckless!" sighed Honora. "I Lucy could leave the poor girl on his hands, of course he is obliged to make some arrangement for getting her home. I never knew such people as they are here. Well, Phoebe, you shall have a partner next time."

Phoebe had one thanks chiefly to Rashi, and somehow the rapid motion shook her out of her troubles, and made her carelessness for Robin's nerves than she had done two minutes before. She was much more absorbed in hopes for another partner.

Also, he did not come; neither then nor for the ensuing. Owen's voice began to rise.

"All there's the trust," said Lucilla, "Owen where have you hidden yourself? I hope you are ready to sink into the earth with shame at hearing you have taken off the bloom from a young lady's first ball."

"It was not he who did so," sternly replied Phoebe.

"And it was all the consequence of the green and white. I told you it was a similes' own," said Owen, chasing away a shade of perplexity from his brow, and assuming a certain air that Phoebe had never seen before and did not like.

"At least you will be merciful and allow me to retrieve my character."

"You have nothing to retrieve," said Phoebe, "the most straightforward manner; 'it' was very good in fact, to take care of poor Miss Maud."

"What became of her? Lucy said you would know."

"I—" he exclaimed, so vehemently as to startle her by the fear of having ignorantly committed some words blunder; "I'm the last person to know."

"I can't be seen with the murderer always falls under suspicion," said Lucilla.

"Drowned in the fountain!" cried Owen, affecting horror.

"That you must have done it," said his sister. "For we can't, I suppose, for reasons of the house, let such a girl be disappointed. Have been washing your hands all this time after the murder?"

"Nothing can clear me, but an appeal to the fountain," said Owen; "will you come and look in, Phoebe? It is more difficult to trust a girl's eyes than a man's; and, for reasons of the moonlight, did not wash the sinner, and was not pleased with Owen's manner; so she refused by a most decided 'No, that's her way,' causing Lucy to laugh at her for thinking Owen dangerous."

"At least you will wash out your sins with me, for I will wash out your sins, as well as all your sins, to the best of my power," said Phoebe.

"I am not that Owen had not said the like things to many times before; it was his ungenerous and for ever that gave her an uncomfortable feeling.

She was not sure that he was not laughing at her by putting on these devilish airs, and she felt herself grown up enough to put an end to them.

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